

Street Gangs



Recognition & Identification

Presented by

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Street Gangs



WHY DO YOUTH JOIN GANGS?

This question has been asked by many segments of the community, from sociologists and psychologists, to law enforcement and the court system, to the parents of the involved youth.

There is often a **lack of acceptance within their family**. Many youth do not feel a sense of acceptance as is common of a traditional family setting. They often have low self-confidence and do not “fit in” at school and are not involved in school activities, like athletics or clubs. Some have learning disabilities or have an anti-social demeanor that does not conform to the “normal” standards of society. A youth who is not accepted by his or her peers tends to seek out companionship where they can find it. Gangs provide a sense of belonging and fill that “void” in the youth’s life. The term “show me love” is a good example of this mentality.

Many of the youth are **lacking a positive adult role model** in their lives. The absence of this influence can contribute to a youth’s decision to join a gang in the first place. The structure of the gang fills this void within their lives and the “OGs” (original gangsters) and older affiliates are role models in the eyes of the youth.

Some youth join because they seek the **protection** of a gang. Those forced to live in areas saturated by street gangs many times feel their only protection is to join the gang which claims their area, or become prey to rival gangs when outside their “barrio” (neighborhood).

Youth often join gangs to establish a **reputation and status** for themselves. Many gang affiliates do not become involved in traditional groups or organizations within society. Once part of a gang, the individual can benefit from the reputation of the gang as a group. Many of the youth are looking for identity and recognition, which they otherwise do not find in mainstream society.

Many times youth join gangs for the **opportunity of financial gain** the gang enables them through criminal activity. Drug manufacture, distribution and sales are a very common means of making money. Intimidation and extortion of both individuals and businesses, along with street crimes like theft, burglary, armed robbery, assault with weapons, and homicide are attributed to gang affiliates.

Maybe one of the most unfortunate reasons for joining a gang has been the **glorification of gangs** by the entertainment industry. Numerous musical artists and actors with gang ties express their gangster life style and glorify the violence through their music and movie roles. The urban hip-hop and rap ideology has become ‘mainstream’ and its influence reaches all races of youth across the country. However, many of these youth do not realize the destructive and negative consequences associated with gangbanging until it is too late.

ENTERING THE GANG WORLD

A person is not just accepted into a street gang in most cases. Most street gangs have adopted a "jump in" method for gang initiation. This involves a prospective affiliate engaging in a physical fight with one or more affiliates for a set amount of time; which varies from gang to gang.

This process shows whether the prospective affiliate has enough "heart" to become an affiliate of the gang. The initiation process does not come at a whim. A prospective affiliate is observed for a period of time to be assessed to see if he or she is a suitable associate. Some gangs have relatives and even multi-generations of family members as gang affiliates. Often times when youth are brought up in a gang environment that involves their siblings or parents, eventual gang membership is expected. Gang affiliates are usually proud of their gang affiliation and affiliation is viewed as an honorable accomplishment.

Once the prospective affiliate has formally entered the gang, he or she must stand up for themselves and the gang if disrespected by any rival. Often times, gang confrontations and gang violence arise from issues; actual or perceived, associated with someone being disrespected. Failure by a gang affiliate to "step up" and challenge who "dissed" them is unacceptable behavior.

Retaliation to any form of disrespect, no matter how small, is expected. There has also been an increase in assaults on law enforcement officers and corrections officers as a result of this mentality. The "pack" mentality is also prevalent within the gang environment and leaving or getting out of the gang can be very difficult.

As a new gang affiliate, it is important to establish a reputation. A respectable reputation may be the only quality a gang affiliate has to validate themselves in the eyes of their peers. Gang affiliates can establish their reputation by "putting in work" for the gang through criminal activity. Acting either "loco" (crazy) or being physically tough can enhance a reputation. A prison sentence for a gang-related crime is also viewed as a "badge of honor" amongst their fellow gang affiliates.

Attempts by a gang affiliate to distance or remove themselves from their gang often times results in them being victimized by the gang. Even if a gang affiliate is able to remove themselves from their gang, they will often times fall victim to rival gangs who do not recognize them as "former" gangsters. Rival gangs will take advantage of the opportunity to catch the former affiliate "slippin" and the affiliate will no longer have the protection of their old gang.

The "Three Rs" of the gang culture are: Reputation, Respect, and Retaliation. Gang affiliates live by these principles and they are maintained as an important value or norm within the gang environment. The "Three Rs" are an expected way of life within the gang lifestyle.

Street Gangs

CRIPS

- ✓ Color associated is blue.
- ✓ Started in late 1960s by Raymond Washington and Michael Conception, in South Central Los Angeles California.
- ✓ Engaged in extortion, assaults and robberies in high schools in South Central Los Angeles.
- ✓ Established a reputation associated with violence and intimidation.
- ✓ Other gangs began “adopting” the Crip name, i.e. The “Main Streeters” became the “Main Street Crips.”
- ✓ Became involved in the manufacture and distribution of crack cocaine and spread to other cities in the Los Angeles County area and eventually expanded their drug operations to cities in other states.
- ✓ Most of the crack cocaine manufactured and distributed in the United States has a gang influence.
- ✓ It is not uncommon for Crip sets to fight among themselves.

BLOODS

- ✓ Color associated is red.
- ✓ Started in 1970 by Sylvester Scott and Vincent Owens as the “Compton Pirus” on West Piru Street in Compton California.
- ✓ Established to protect themselves against the growing number of Crip sets in South Central Los Angeles.
- ✓ Grew very quickly and became very strong in the Compton area of Los Angeles.
- ✓ Are the traditional rivals of the Crips.
- ✓ The names “Piru” and “Blood” are synonymous in meaning and both will indicate a Blood set.
- ✓ Also became involved in the manufacture and distribution of crack cocaine and expended their drug operations into other cities in Los Angeles County and then to cities in other states.
- ✓ There are only about half as many Blood sets as there are Crip sets nationwide.
- ✓ Blood sets will usually get along with each other.

Street Gangs

SURENOS

- ✓ Color associated in blue.
- ✓ “SUR” is Spanish for South and a claim to Southern California.
- ✓ Number “13” is also associated with Southerners and stands for the letter “M” (thirteenth letter of the alphabet) which represents “Mexican Mafia” or “La Eme” criminal organization.
- ✓ The Mexican Mafia began in the early 1950s at the Del Norte Vocational center in Tracy, CA thirteen youth from East LA, including Rudy Cadena, Joseph Morgan, Armando Mendoza, Carlos Ortega, for protection.
- ✓ Subsequently gained control of a large portion of the drug market in the California prison system.
- ✓ The Mexican Mafia engages in the manufacture and major distribution of methamphetamine along the West Coast.
- ✓ Most Southern California Hispanic street gangs associate with Sureno, but also claim their individual gang or “clique.”

NORTENOS

- ✓ Color association is red.
- ✓ “Norte” is Spanish for North and a claim to Northern California.
- ✓ Number “14” is also associated with Northerners and stands for the letter “N” (fourteenth letter of the alphabet) which represents “Nuestra Familia” criminal organization.
- ✓ Began to form in 1969 at San Quentin State Prison as result of the “shoe murder” when Northern inmates retaliated and attacked La Eme inmates on Mexican Independence Day (17 inmates stabbed and 1 killed).
- ✓ Established for the protection of Northern Californian Hispanics, many of them migrant workers, from incarcerated Mexican Mafia Members.
- ✓ “Nuestra Raza” started in 1983 at Folsom State Prison, the “Northern Structure” name given to them by the California DOC during crackdown.
- ✓ The Nuestra Familia criminal organization engages in drug activity inside the California prison system, as well as, out on the streets.
- ✓ Most Northern California Hispanic street gangs associates with Norteno, but claim their individual gang or “clique.”

Street Gangs

FOLK NATION

- ✓ Color associations vary among individual gangs.
- ✓ All gangs of the Folk Nation always exhibit a “Right” orientation.
- ✓ Some symbols associated are a six-pointed star, a six-pointed crown, pyramids, and a three-prong pitchfork.
- ✓ In the early 1970s, David Barksdale of the Black Disciples and Larry Hoover of the Gangster Disciples formed the Black Gangster Disciple Nation in response to the formation of the Black P Stone Nation.
- ✓ During the 1980s, gangs of both nations began separating into alliances; The BGDs aligned themselves with the Folk Nation in the Illinois prison system.
- ✓ Some of the major gangs within the Folk Nation are; Gangster Disciples, Black Disciples, Black Gangster Disciples.
- ✓ The Folk Nation is led by Larry Hoover and Jerome “Shorty” Freeman.
- ✓ Barksdale, Hoover, and Freeman are considered the three “Kings” of the Folk Nation.
- ✓ Gangs of the Folk Nation engage in drug activity and have expanded their operations throughout the United States.

PEOPLE NATION

- ✓ Color associations vary among the individual gangs.
- ✓ Gangs of the People Nation always exhibit “Left” oriented.
- ✓ Some symbols associated are a five-pointed star, a five-pointed crown, and a half-crescent moon.
- ✓ In the late 1960s, Jeff Fort of The Black P Stones organized the Black P Stone Nation which was comprised of dozens of Chicago gangs.
- ✓ During the 1980s, most Black P Stone gangs aligned themselves with one, the People Nation, of two alliances within the Illinois prison system.
- ✓ Some of the major gangs within the People Nation are; Black P Stones, Vice Lords, Latin Kings.
- ✓ Gangs of the People Nation engage in drug activity and have also spread throughout the United States.
- ✓ The Chicago-based gangs of the Folk and People Nations tend to be more organized and structured than other street gangs.

Street Gangs

ASIANS

- ✓ No definitive color association and will usually deny gang affiliation during contacts with police.
- ✓ Very difficult gangs to work, very street smart and will exploit cultural unawareness of officers.
- ✓ Very mobile criminals engaging in traveling crime sprees committed through opportunity of association with other Asians.
- ✓ Usually prey upon other persons of their own ethnicity and are often very organized when committing crimes.
- ✓ Are Buddhists and believe death is predetermined; which contributes to a fatalistic mentality.
- ✓ Operate under the premise that any level of violence is acceptable to obtain a desired means.
- ✓ Culture does not allow one to “lose face,” shame is unacceptable and atonement is expected from the one who brings shame upon the gang.
- ✓ Tattoos and body scarring are usually an indication of gang affiliation because both are not cultural norms.
- ✓ The four “T”s represent: “Love” (Tinh), “Money” (Tien), “Prison” (Tu), “Sin” (Toi), if a fifth “T” is present, it represents: “Revenge” (Thu).
- ✓ It is not uncommon for Asian gangsters to imitate American street gangs and their mannerisms.
- ✓ It is also common for Asian gang affiliates to maintain an appearance that does not look like a “gangster.”

STREET GANGS ARE NO LONGER LIMITED TO A CERTAIN RACE OF YOUTH, ALL RACES OF YOUTH HAVE BECOME INVOLVED WITH STREET GANGS.

ALTHOUGH SOME STREET GANG SETS MAY ONLY INCLUDE YOUTH OF A SPECIFIC RACE, RESIDENT GANG AFFILIATES WILL MOST LIKELY REFLECT THE RACIAL POPULATION OF A COMMUNITY.

Gang Tattoos



GANG TATTOOS

The word tattoo is reportedly derived from the ancient Tahitian word “Tatu.” It is believed that tattoos have been around since about 12,000 BC, but recorded history can trace them back to approximately the time the great pyramids were being constructed in ancient Egypt.

Tattoos have long been used to identify people in many cultures. The street gang culture of today is no different. Gang affiliates use tattoos for several reasons. Gang affiliates will often times have numerous tattoos, especially if they have served time in prison. Their tattoos may include one or more symbols that the gang has adopted as an identifier unique to the gang or their individual set. Some of these symbols are; stars, crowns, and pitchforks. Gang affiliates will usually have their name or “moniker” (street name) tattooed on them.

Gang affiliates commonly have tattoos with abbreviations, initials, and numbers associated with their gang or set. Some common abbreviations are “SUR” (South) and “NORTE” (North). Many times initials specify the affiliate’s set; such as “WSR60” (West Side Rollin Sixties Crips), “BH” (Bounty Hunter Bloods), or “NLR” (Nazi Low Riders). Numbers are often used in relation to corresponding letters of the alphabet, “274” (Black Gangster Disciples) or “13” (Mexican Mafia / La Eme).

Other tattoos may include “R.I.P.” (Rest In Peace) tributes to their deceased homeboys. Teardrop tattoos near an eye or the “Smile Now, Cry Later” faces are both common gang tattoos. Common gang phrases; such as “Thug Life” or “Cholo Por Vida” (Gangster For Life) are often found in tattoos. Three dots on the web of a hand means: “Mi Vida Loca” (My Crazy Life).

There are some tattoos that can give an officer insight that the gang affiliate has served time in prison. Spider webs can often mean time served or tombstones with numbers on them will indicate years they were incarcerated. Racial pride tattoos, such as; “SWP” (Supreme White Power) or “White Pride” are common amongst inmates, since alliances for protection and gang affiliation are usually established by race. Wearing an unauthorized gang tattoo can be hazardous to one’s health, especially in a prison setting.

Tattoos are an excellent source of intelligence for law enforcement officers and corrections officers to identify suspected gang affiliates. Officers should make every attempt to observe and document all tattoos on any suspected gang affiliate or associate. The best method to document tattoos is to photograph them. Getting photos of the tattoos, as well as, an overall photo of the subject is preferred. Sometimes gang affiliates will lie about their tattoos in an attempt to conceal their gang ties. However, they will often disclose information about the tattoos and their meanings. Officers should attempt to gain as much information as possible if the gang affiliate is willing to cooperate.

Gang Graffiti



HISTORY OF GRAFFITI

The word "Graffiti" originates from the Italian word "Graffito" and it is defined as "an inscription or design written or scratched on a wall" with the intent to be seen by the public. It is hard to pinpoint when or where graffiti actually got its start. If writing on the walls during the time of the cave man counts, graffiti began with prehistoric "taggers."

During World War II the phrase "Kilroy Was Here," was written and scrawled on tanks and military equipment overseas and throughout Europe. The phrase later showed up in the subways of New York City and other areas of the United States.

In the 1950s, street gangs began using graffiti to mark their territory, for self-promotion and intimidation. When a rival gang entered another gang's territory and saw, for example, "Vato Locos" written several times with lists of affiliates, it would show the size and strength of that gang. Initiation for a gang member during that time was to hang the prospective affiliate off the side of a bridge. While hanging by his ankles upside down, the affiliate would write his name. The 1960s brought the invention of the "Magic Marker." The Magic Marker was and still is the instrument of choice for many taggers; due to its ability to write on almost any surface and its easy concealment.

"TAKI 183" was probably the first tag that gained much notoriety. The subject was named Demetrius and he came to America from Greece, settling in the Washington Heights area of Manhattan in 1970. Demetrius met another tagger named Julio who lived nearby on 204th Street. Julio used to write his name and street number as "JULIO 204" in public places. Demetrius' nickname was "TAKI" and he lived on 183rd street, so he began writing "TAKI 183" throughout the City of New York starting at the age of fifteen. His tag first appeared on the side of an ice cream truck. Demetrius got a job as a messenger and while he was working, he would write his name along his routes and on the buildings he entered. Demetrius used wide markers that gave him more recognition because his tagging stuck out from all the others who were using regular markers.

In July of 1971, a reporter from the New York Times interviewed Demetrius and the first article about tagging appeared in a newspaper. Other youth were impressed with the publicity and he gained somewhat of an urban legend notoriety. Years later, a movie called "TURK 182" was produced and many of the ideas for the movie were a direct result of Demetrius and his famous "TAKI 183" tag.

The Missoula Anti-Graffiti Task Force

It began in 1995 through the efforts of two citizens who saw a need to address the growing graffiti problem in the community. The Missoula Anti-Graffiti Task Force (MAGTF) was established as a community based organization open to interested citizens. The MAGTF purpose and goal is to assist the Missoula Police Department in the documentation and eradication of graffiti. The only proven deterrent to graffiti is its immediate removal. The MAGTF has also been active in the education of both residents and business owners about the impact of graffiti on the community. A system was established to process graffiti reports within the police department and followed by a referral for removal to the MAGTF. The information gathered from the reports is analyzed for investigative and intelligence purposes. The MAGTF has been successful in removing most graffiti from the city, often within hours of its discovery. A network has been established that provides both paint and supplies donated from local construction contractors. Local citizens have also provided monetary donations to the MAGTF.

GANG GRAFFITI vs. TAGGER GRAFFITI

Gang graffiti has been called the “newspaper of the streets.” Its presence is usually the first sign of street gang activity in an specific area or neighborhood. Graffiti serves a useful purpose to the gang, including identifying territorial boundaries, giving a "roster" of its affiliates, advertising the gang's exploits, and communicating messages to rival gangs. Law enforcement can use graffiti in many ways. It is useful to identify the gangs operating in certain areas, identify individual gang affiliates by their monikers, monitor gang challenges, rivalries, and threats and to develop leads on gang related crimes.

Tagger graffiti, unlike gang graffiti, is not normally "turf" related. It can be spread throughout a city or specific area. The more a tagger writes, the more recognition they achieve. The main goal of a tagger is to obtain notoriety and they will go to great lengths to achieve this goal. This includes climbing up to and on dangerous places to get their tag at very visible locations (billboards, freeway signs, etc.). Taggers have no rules for obtaining their "tag." They may choose the tag or “moniker” because it sounds good, appeals to them in some way, or is easy to write. Unlike a gang affiliate, a tagger may change his tag as well as, his tagging "crew" numerous times. A tagger is often not dedicated to just one crew. If a tagger gets arrested writing one name, they may decide to no longer use it and simply make up a new tag. Sometimes even when taggers change their tag, it may still appear because someone else has picked it up or their tagging crew still includes in their graffiti.

READING GANG GRAFFITI

Names: Gang names are usually abbreviated to two or three letters, but may include the affiliation of the gang written out (i.e. Crips, Bloods, or SUR, NORTE) as well as slogans such as “Rifa Mos” (We Rule) or “Por Vida” (For Life).

Monikers: The “Moniker” or street names of gang affiliates are frequently included with the graffiti, often in a “placa” or roll call list. The Monikers often are a description of the appearance or mannerism of the gang affiliate (i.e. Smiley, Goofy, Joker, Flaco or Lil Capone).

Territory or Turf: The area claimed by a gang, including city names, street names, geographical areas, parks or directional locators (i.e. Westside, Eastside etc) are usually included. Stacked lettering is another method used to indicate directional locations. Three number combinations usually document the area code of the turf claimed by the gang.

Threats and Challenges: Graffiti often challenges and issues threats to rival gangs. A gang affiliate may “X” out or cross out the graffiti written by their rivals as a sign of disrespect. The number “187” is the CA state municipal code for homicide and it is commonly used. “BK” & “CK” are also common, meaning “Blood Killer” and “Crip Killer.” Upside down, backwards or crossed out letters or words are all signs of disrespect and often indicate the gang's rivals.

Numbers: Numerous numbers are commonly associated with gangs. The numbers “13” and “14” are very common with Hispanic gangs and identify an association with Southern or Northern California. The numbers “5” and “6” are commonly associated with the People and folk Nation gangs. The number “18” is commonly associated with the 18th Street Gang, which is the largest Hispanic gang on the West Coast.

Symbols: Some gangs use symbols to identify affiliation or alliances (i.e. 5-pointed stars and crowns for People Nation gangs and 6-pointed stars and crowns and pitchforks for Folk Nation gangs).

Gang Language



Common Street Gang Language

B	BG	Baby Gangster
	BK	Blood Killer
	Bo	Marijuana
	Break	Run, Get away
	Bullet	One year in custody / Sentence
	Busted On	Shot at or Shot Someone
	Buster	Individual acting like a gang affiliate / A fake gang affiliate
C	CK	Crip Killer
	Cap	To shoot
	Colors	Showing gang affiliation by wearing associated gang attire
	Crab	Derogatory term for Crips
	Crack	Rock Cocaine
	Crew	A gangster's associates
	Crumbs	Tiny pieces of Rock Cocaine
	Cuzz	Crip gang affiliate
D	Dis	No respect / Disrespect
	Do A Ghost	Leave the scene / Hide from the police
	Double Deuce	.22 caliber gun
	Down For Mine	Ability to protect yourself
	Due-rag	Handkerchief of gang colors wrapped around head
	Duster	Under the influence of PCP
E	Eight-Track	2 ½ grams of Cocaine
	Eight-Ball	3 ½ grams or 1/8 ounce Cocaine or Methamphetamine
	Ends	Money
F	Folk	Chicago gang alliance
G	G-Ride	Gangster ride / Stolen car used to commit crimes
	Gage	Shotgun
	Game	Criminal active
	Gat	Gun
	Get Down	Fight
	Got It Going On	Successful person or function
H	High Roller	Successful drug dealer
	Holding Down	Controlling turf or area
	Homeboy / Homey	Fellow gang affiliate
	Hood	Neighborhood / Area or residence
	Hustler / Player	Not into gangs – Strictly out to make money
I	In the Mix	Involved in gang activity
J	Jacked Up	Assaulted / Robbery
K	Kibbles & Bits	Crumbs of Cocaine

Common Street Gang Language

L	Legit	For real / Proper
	Lit Up	Shoot at person, vehicle, or building
	Loc'd Out / Loco	Crazy
M	Mad Dog	Aggressive look to challenge or promote confrontation
	Making Bank	Getting money by illegal means
N	NORTE / 14	Nortenos
	Northern Star	Northern Structure
	Nut Up	Angry / Mad at somebody
O	OG	Original Gangster
	One Time	Police
P	People	Chicago gang alliance
	Piru	Same as Bloods
	Popped A Cap	Shot at someone
	Posse	East Coast term for gang
	Primo	Marijuana joint laced with Cocaine
	Put Em in Check	Discipline someone
	Put In Some Work	Doing criminal activity for your gang
	Put It on the Set	To validate what you're saying is the truth
R	Rag	Handkerchief of a gang's color
	Righteous	True or affirmative answer
	Rock House	House where Crack Cocaine is manufactured or sold
	Rollin	Doing well
S	Set	Neighborhood or local gang name
	Sherm	Marijuana joint laced with PCP
	Shot Caller	Person in charge
	Slippin	Alone or unprepared
	Slob	Derogatory term for Bloods
	Snaps	Money
	Squab	Fight / Argue
	Sup	What's up / What's going on
	SUR / 13	Surenos
T	Talking Smack	Aggressive or disrespecting words
	Trippin	Over reacting
U	Up on It	Have knowledge of drug scene / Successful at dealing drugs
W	Wack	PCP
	What it "B" Like?	Blood greeting
	What Up Cuzz?	Crip greeting
	Word	O.K. / Things are alright
#	187	California criminal code for homicide
	50	Police

Gang Hand Signs



Gangs use hand signs as a means of communication. Most often, hand signs are used to represent their gang set, issue a challenge, or throw out an insult to a rival. Many gang assaults start with the exchange of gang hand signs between rival gangs. This is sometimes referred to as "flashing" or "throwing" gang signs. Sometimes hand signs are a symbol of something significant to the gang such as numbers; "13" (Surenos) or "14" (Nortenos), and letters; "LK" (Latin Kings) or "GD" (Gangster Disciples) for gang names. Gang hand signs can signify an acronym such as a "W" for West Coast or "QVO" (a street variation of the Spanish phrase, "Que Hubo" or "What's Up?" that a rival gang affiliate would see as a challenge). A hand sign can be a direct threat or insult, such as throwing "BK" (Blood Killer) or "CK" (Crip Killer). Below are some common examples of gang hand signs.



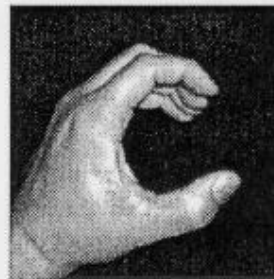
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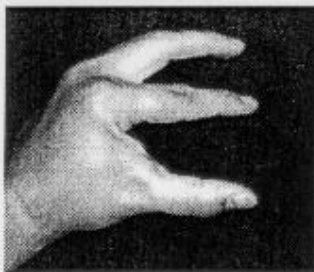
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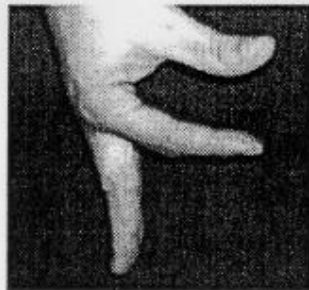
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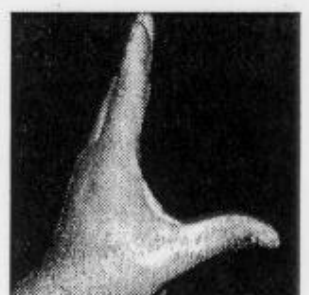
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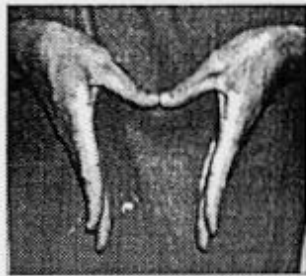
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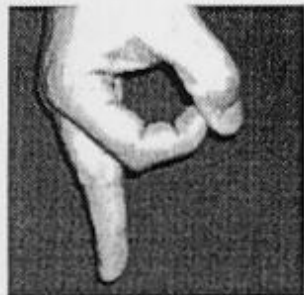
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V



W



W



X



12 Ave.



13



13



36th St.



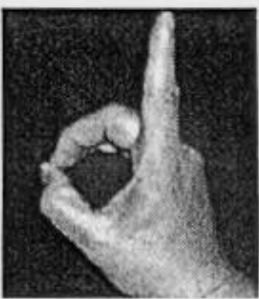
187



Blood



B Up



BLOOD



Blood Killer



Barrio Vista



Crip



Crip



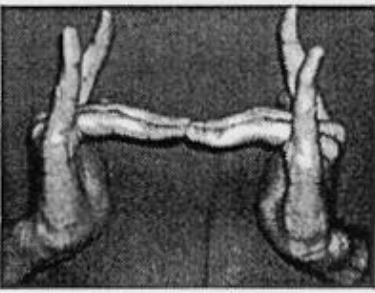
Crip Killer



Crip Cuz



Fuck Crips



Hollywood



Centro



ECGC



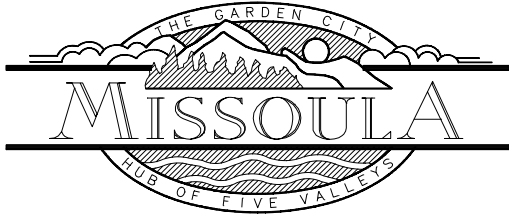
Westside



Sur



CRIP



MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT

"Professionalism with Pride"

Detective Guy Baker has been employed by the Missoula Police Department for twenty-three years. While assigned to the Uniform Patrol Division from 1990-1994, he became a training officer within the Field Training and Evaluation Program for new police recruits and also participated in the Missoula School District's Adopt-A-Cop Program. Baker was a member of the police department's S.W.A.T. team from 1995-2011 and he has been a P.O.S.T. certified instructor for the Montana Law Enforcement Academy since 1996.

Baker has actively worked Missoula's gang presence since its emergence 1991. He was one of the initial two officers chosen to work the Target Enforcement Unit when it began in 1994 to target the city's growing street gang presence. The unit developed a proactive approach and maintained a 'zero tolerance' mentality that resulted in over 300 charges being filed against suspected or confirmed street gang affiliates and their associates from 1995-2000. Baker played an integral role in the unit until he transferred to the Detective Division in 2000. He currently works crimes against persons, gang related investigations and is assigned to an F.B.I. Safe Streets Task Force (Montana Regional Violent Crime Task Force) that targets violent offenders and gang related crime.

Baker has gained a comprehensive knowledge regarding street gangs during his career through continuous education and training. He has completed hundreds of hours of certified training at regional and national gang conferences and symposiums around the country. Baker has also spent a considerable amount of time working with gang units of other law enforcement agencies in Spokane, Seattle, Las Vegas, Long Beach and Los Angeles. He has provided instruction on the identification and recognition of street gangs at more than 250 presentations and training sessions for law enforcement, corrections, schools, and communities across the Northwest.

An eighteen year member of the Northwest Gang Investigators Association, Baker has been on the executive board for fourteen years and is currently the Senior Vice President. He is the Western States Gang Intelligence Network's Northwest Regional Representative and former executive board member and past President of the Montana Violent Crime Investigators Association. Detective Baker's professional affiliations have also included memberships with the Texas Gang Investigators Association, the California Gang Investigators Association, Montana Narcotics Officers Association and the Mountain States Tactical Officers Association.